DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 054 082 SP 005 260

AUTHOR	Jacobson, Claire
TITLE	Work Relations Between Professionals and Paraprofessionals in Head Start (April 1, 1969 - August 31, 1970). Interim Report.
INSTITUTION	Bank Street Coll. of Education, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	70
NOTE	52p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Nonprofessional Personnel, *Paraprofessional School Personnel, *Role Perception, *Social Workers, *Teacher Aides, Work Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	*Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

This report focuses on the differences in work relations between teachers and teacher aides and between social workers and social service aides, using data obtained from in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and meetings at two Head Start centers. Center One, which is church sponsored, has two classrooms and 60 children, with two teachers, two teacher aides, a social worker operating out of central headquarters, and three locally based staff members (one family assistant and two family workers). Center Two is sponsored by a settlement house, with three classrooms and 90 children, three teachers and four teacher aides, and a social service staff similar to that of Center One. The work relations between teachers and aides are illustrated mainly by data from Center One, with additional material from Center Two, while the work relations between social worker and family staff are illustrated mainly by data from Center Two with additional material from Center One. The study examines the professionals' attitudes towards paraprofessionals, role definitions, and roles performed by paraprofessionals, the working relations between paraprofessionals and professionals, the kind of work ethic which develops, and the effects of employment on paraprofessionals. (MBM)

ED054082

F OEO

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: SP PS

In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

Bank Street College of Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

WORK RELATIONS BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS IN HEAD START

Interim Report April 1, 1969 - August 31, 1970

Claire Jacobson, Ph.D.

December 1970

Research Division
Bank Street College of Education
610 West 112th Street
New York, N. Y. 10025

OEO Grant CG 8034

SP005260

INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on the differences in work relations between, on the one hand, teachers and teacher aides and, on the other, between social workers and social service aides. The data on the basis of which these differences are explicated come from in depth interviews, classroom observations, and meetings at the Head Start centers.

The work relations between teachers and aides will be mainly illustrated by data from Center One, with additional material from Center Two. The work relations between social worker and family staff will be mainly illustrated by data from Center Two, with additional material from Center One. The justification for this procedure rests on the following: On the basis of our work in 1967-1968 we anticipated finding sharp differences in work relations between the teaching component and the social work component of Head Start. After preliminary inspection of the data, we found these differences to be most highly patterned and aptly illustrated, for teaching, in Center One and, for social work, in Center Two.

A later report, the data for which will come from all five centers in our sample, will focus on intercenter differences in work relations both in the educational area and the social service area and on differences stemming from the congruence or incongruence in status of the persons who constitute interacting dyads in the centers. A last type of comparison will focus on the diachronic dimension: that is, work relations will be compared at two points in time, which correspond to the two cycles in our data-collection process.

The questions to which we have addressed ourselves in our study are the following:

1. What are the attitudes of professionals toward the employment of paraprofessionals?

2. What type of role definitions develop through time?

3. What kinds of socialization for the roles of paraprofessionals obtain?

4. Do paraprofessionals perform bridging roles, do they mediate the cultural and class gaps between middle-class professionals and the low-income clientele?

5. Whom do paraprofessionals identify with -- staff or parents -- and do they develop an autonomous paraprofessional identity?

6. What kind of work ethic develops?

7. What is the nature of working relations between paraprofessionals and professionals?

8. What are the effects of employment on paraprofessionals -- consequences for status, self-image, interpersonal relations, performance of family roles, mobility, and so forth?

Center One is one of a number of centers sponsored by a church. It has two classrooms and 60 children. Teaching staff is made up of two teachers and two teacher aides. The social service staff consists of a social worker, who operates out of central headquarters, and three locally based staff members: one family assistant and two family workers.

Center Two is sponsored by a settlement house. It has three classrooms and 90 children. Teaching staff consists of three teachers and four teacher aides. The social service staff is constituted similarly to that of Center One.

Chart of Statuses and Persons (initials are fictitious)

	Center One	Center Two
Teaching Staff		
Teacher	BT	SH
Teacher Aide	SC	FD
Teacher	BW	
Teacher Aide	KU	
Social Service Staff		
Social worker	GN	BD
Family ass't.	EM	NI
Family worker	IY	GC
Family worker	TS	OG

TEACHING: CENTER ONE

I. Attitudes toward the Employment of Paraprofessionals

The main rationale which Head Start teachers give for the employment of teacher aides is the absolutely indispensable role which the latter play in helping to manage a class of children whose size is beyond the managing capacity of one person. As one teacher put it, "With 22 children I need an assistant teacher. There's no getting around that question." An assistant is thus indispensable in helping the teacher run a class of 15 or more children, some of whom are barely beyond the stage of infancy.

It is further hypothesized by teachers that the presence of two adults in the classroom has beneficial effects on the children: different class activities can be initiated and supervised catering to different child interests; the class can be divided into groups for academic instruction

-- for instance, fast and slow groups, each getting the appropriate instruction; closer relations with children can be developed, since two persons have more time to spend individually with children; finally the children interact with two adults, among whom they may choose, according to their predilections, to secure nurturance and guidance.

Teachers further indicate that indigenous paraprofessionals who are also parents are well suited for assistant positions because of the following assumptions about paraprofessionals: 1) they have acquired personal experience in child-rearing which leads to their competence in the management of children in the classroom; and 2) due to indigenous residence in the community where the center is located they know the social and personal background of children and by passing this information on to teachers, can help them acquire a better understanding of the children.

II. Role Allocation

The following kinds of functions can be extracted from the daily flow of work performed by teachers and their assistants: planning and reviewing of the day's activities; creating a learning environment; management of children (e.g. supervision during play and story telling, discipline, etc.); formal instruction; paperwork (record writing); "menial work": cleaning up, putting materials back on shelves, setting table for meals, toileting of children; and overall direction of the classroom ("setting tone," announcing transitions).

A. Planning and review: It is clear that planning is a joint activity. Teacher and assistant sit down every day to plan what activities shall be initiated that day. They also engage in consultation at the end of the day to talk about "how it came out" or "why it went wrong."

B. Creating a learning environment: Teacher and assistant together

set up the classroom and lay out toys and games at the beginning of the morning and of the afternoon, or they take turns at doing this.

C. Classroom management: Teacher and aide take turns at managing the class. One teacher put it in this fashion: Sometimes she feels "lazy" and the assistant takes over, or vice-versa. The decision as to who will manage is implicit, based on "sensing each other's feelings." But management may be a more time-consuming activity for the assistant because she sees to it that children behave when the teacher gives lessons or leads in singing or story-telling and she supervises free play when the teacher is working on her reports.

D. Formal instruction: The formal teaching of academic skills (colors, numbers, alphabet) is usually within the teacher's province, although teachers state that assistants would, on the basis of their observation of what the teacher does, be able to teach academic skills and do so when the teacher is absent. However, it is stated that only one person, the teacher, should direct instructional activities, although occasionally the assistant may work with a small group on the alphabet, for example.

E. Paperwork: The teacher ordinarily reserves for herself all paperwork (keeping attendance and filling out records), that is, all work having to do with the handling of symbols, whereas activities involving interpersonal relations are, as we have seen, more evenly shared by teacher and assistant. One teacher explains that her assistant would know what to record on a child but "wouldn't be able to write it down." Another teacher claims that her assistant has the competence to record, but does not enjoy writing. We shall see that (see below, Section VII), in the first case, the unwillingness of the teacher in letting her assistant collaborate with her in this activity was a major source of conflict in their relationship.

F. Menial work: It is in the area of menial work that the egalitarian ideology of the teacher with respect to her relationship to her assistant is most clearly expressed. Teachers say that there is nothing teachers ought not do and relegate to their assistants. Thus one teacher, BT, says that she has not been freed from tasks she ought not to do as a professional: "We do the same things, we both wipe tables..." In the case of another teacher, BW, either the teacher or the assistant supervises the toileting of children prior to lunch, while the other sets the table. In this case, teacher and assistant take turns at cleaning the room, one doing it in the morning and the other in the afternoon, while they may do it jointly between the morning and afternoon sessions. Despite the joint involvement in menial work, still the teacher shows her obsession with egalitarianism and her fear of not doing a fair share of menial work when she states that she first felt guilty about letting the assistant clean up by herself in the afternoon. She states in no ambiguous terms: "Professionals should do everything."

Teacher aides also perceive this area as one of joint participation: "Whoever sees that something has to be cleaned, does it... If you want to, you can; if you don't, leave it."

G. Overall direction of classroom: The initiative for overall guidance of what takes place in the classroom is exercised by the teacher. She sets the tone and controls the flow of activity for the day; she announces transitions between activities. However, when no overall class activity is taking place (such as singing, story telling), the teacher gives freedom to the assistant to guide small-group activities and work with individual children. The assistant is responsible for the activities she initiates and the teacher does not directly supervise her.

It is evident from this review of the allocation of roles between teacher and assistant that there is very little specialization, and that the teacher allocates to herself alone very few functions (mainly overall direction of the classroom and paperwork). She takes pride in performing all the functions involved in the responsibility for a class of children, including ones which one might assume ought to be delegated to the assistant, who is less qualified and trained than she and who could be conceived to be the appropriate person to relieve the teacher from menial duties.

The flexible division of labor is particularly manifest in the ad hoc nature of role allocation. Teacher and aide, on the basis of personal preference or mood, decide on what each will do. Thus the assistant, SC, does not like to read stories, so she allocates that role activity to herself only when the teacher is absent. And her teacher, BT, is perfectly agreeable to this decision: "We respect one another's preferences." As we say above, who will perform classroom management activities also depends somewhat on personal feelings of the moment, which may not even be overtly communicated.

These observations on the structuring of roles and the apprenticeship served by the assistant in numerous activities make comprehensible the facility with which the assistant can "fill the professional's shoes," that is, take over the class, even for lengthy periods, when the teacher is absent.

A clear case for the role of the assistant as a co-teacher or surrogate teacher is made by BT: "Paraprofessionals ought not to be used for sharpening pencils and taking attendance. They are adults ... they are sensitive to children's needs as much as the professionals ... they can reach

children as well as professionals." BT finally ends her case for the full involvement of paraprofessionals in teaching with the remark that "A good paraprofessional is superior to a bad teacher."

III. Socialization into Work Role

A. Role Induction

At Center One, because the administrative staff performed no orientation function for new teachers and the assistants had seniority when teachers first came on the job, it devolved, by default, upon the assistants to induct teachers into their roles.

Thus, BT asked SC to tell her about the functioning of the Center and at the beginning leaned on her: "I wanted her to be the teacher and me the assistant." BT also relied upon SC to manage the children and handle behavior problems. After a few weeks she acquired control of the classroom and assumed responsibility for overall direction.

The other teacher, BW, confessed to feeling like an "outsider" when she first came. She let KU direct the class on the basis of the schedule which the previous teacher and KU had devised. Thus, KU "told me what to do," which led to some resentment on BW's part. The devolution of leadership onto her assistant was rationalized on two bases: 1) management: KU is a parent, so she "understands" children; 2) instruction: KU "has been around several teachers," so she has gotten ideas as to what a good program should be like. The assistant was thus used as a model of proper teacher behavior and as a reference person: In the first few weeks BW

asked herself: "Am I doing this right? Is KU comparing me with the previous teacher?"

B. Supervision of Role Behavior

The teachers at this center (and at Center Two) resented the almost total lack of supervision and guidance by the administrative staff. The educational director "was seldom around." The teachers did not know whether they "were doing right or wrong." They were not informed as to what their goals for the children should be or what approaches to take to reach these goals. They wanted "concrete ideas" for programs and these were not forthcoming. The educational director's attitude was perceived by one teacher as: "You're the teacher .. you decide ...!" When guidance was offered, it was inconsistent: Thus the educational director "emphasized free learning one moment, structured skills the next." The lack of direction was so demoralizing that one teacher perceived it as a possible reason for teacher turnover.

The same laissez-faire kind of supervision exercised by the educational director also characterized the teacher-assistant teacher relationship. One teacher, BT, denies the very fact of supervision: "The idea of being a supervisor doesn't exist." Rathar than supervision, there is mutual consultation: at the beginning of the day, during the rest period and at the end of the day, as well as at weekly meetings, BT and her assistant SC "discuss and clarify what is happening and decide what to do next."

Sometimes BT presents to SC "a different way of doing something" or she asks SC "why she did what she did." But BT says that she is open-minded, SC might be right. If there is disagreement BT gives SC the benefit

of the doubt and does not insist that SC accept BT's interpretation. If SC "doesn't handle a child right" BT "tells her" after class and SC "understands." BT makes it a point never to criticize SC in front of the children. When SC takes charge of a small group of children, BT makes a point of not going over to where SC is and asking her what she is doing: "SC is responsible for what she initiates."

SC also perceives the situation as one of minimal supervision on the part of the teacher and autonomy for her. Sometimes BT shows SC a faster way of doing something, but if SC wants to do it her own way she does and BT does not press her. "Nobody stands over me watching me and giving me a bad time. You're on your own and use your own judgment."

The other teacher, BW, talks about supervision as being "informal": "We talk when we have free time about things as they come. She /KU/ can tell me anything; I can tell her anything." BW sees no need ever to reprimand KU: "KU got used to me, she knows what to do."

C. Formal Training for Role Behavior

At Center One the two teachers have different styles for improving teaching skills and behavior on the part of assistants. BW does not think it necessary formally to teach teaching skills to KU: "KU observes and catches on and follows the same manner" as she.

BT teaches SC certain skills through example: for example, how to approach a concept and get it across to children. She also discusses methods of reaching "the hard-to-reach child." Her assistant SC similarly perceives the on-going training by the teacher: BT taught her certain arts and crafts, how to teach children how to write, add and subtract, etc.

But BT does not believe that she has the capacity or time to give her assistant systematic training. Nor does she believe that the delegate agency should undertake this. She thinks that it would be more productive to have inservice training in a central place, catering to many centers, attracting a multitude of experts: "Concentrated learning in a college situation is very good."

She does not perceive the professional-paraprofessional work relations as problematic in any way on the basis of her experience and thus sees no need for inservice training for either professionals or paraprofessionals to deal with this issue. "Teachers should sit down informally with their assistants. This works unless the teacher has a hangup that the professional is up here and the paraprofessional down here." It should be noted in passing that the delegate agency has not included work relations between professionals and paraprofessionals as a topic in the inservice training which university consultants provide for agency personnel.

IV. The Paraprofessional as a Bridge between Professionals and the Clientele

An assumption in the employment of the poor to service the poor is that the paraprofessional serves as a liaison between the middle-class institution and the low-income population. Indigenous staff are conceived of as "bridge people," able to interpret community life and values to the professionals and serve as interpreters of the professionals to the clientele.

Thus, among the questions to be considered are the following:

1. Is the role of paraprofessionals as interclass communicators accepted in the centers? In what ways do paraprofessionals mediate

or facilitate the relationship between teachers and parents?

2. What is being communicated to professionals about community life and values?
3. Do professionals make a concerted attempt to interpret their roles and rationales to paraprofessionals who then transmit this information to the parents?
4. If the paraprofessional does exercise a mediating role, what effects, if any, does this have on professional practices?

BT denies that her assistant SC acts as a bridge between her and the parents because she perceives herself as coming from the same background as SC and having also lived in the ghetto. She does not need to use SC as a link to the community because "Parents tell me directly about the community, housing complaints...." SC concurs with BT in denying that her knowledge of the community is in any way superior to that of BT and that she functions as a liaison between the parents and BT.

On the other hand, the sheer presence of SC acts, in BT's estimation, as a powerful force in drawing parents to the center and thus, by implication coming under the ministrations of professional staff: "Parents like to see a face familiar to them who lives in the community. They can identify with her... someone who didn't go to college and is a neighbor and thus they can more easily participate and get involved in the education of the child."

BT makes an attempt at interpreting her goals and methods of teaching to SC: For example, they have discussions centering around philosophy of education -- structured vs. less structured. But it is unclear from the evidence whether the assistant's growing knowledge and understanding

about educational priorities and alternatives, as presented by the teacher, are communicated to parents and thus whether she operates here as a link going from professional to parents. It is more probable that, if the lines of communication between teacher and parents are open, which BT says they are, BT would deal directly with parent concerns about educational goals and methods.

Finally, we can ask whether the presence of SC has any effects on BT's professional practices. The answer to this question appears to be affirmative. BT argues that she is more reflective than SC about how to handle behavior problems, whereas SC acts on her "spontaneous feelings." This BT seems to admire and attempts to emulate: "SC has been a teacher to me. It was a good learning experience." It would appear from her remarks that BT ascribes superior performance in the management of children to the paraprofessional.

In the case of the other teacher-assistant relationship, the assistant, KU, is at greater ease communicating with parents than the teacher, BW. She lives in the neighborhood, knows the parents and tells BW about the family background of the children. According to her, the parents feel more comfortable with her because she has been at the Center longer than the teacher. KU also informs BW about events in the community and accompanies her to community meetings. On the other hand, KU does not expect BW to explain her methods of teaching because "I know why ... I would do the same thing."

V. Identification Patterns

Both teacher aides identify more closely with their teachers than with parents, and they see parents as perceiving them more as staff members

closely related to teachers than as parents like themselves who happen to have jobs at the center. Furthermore, both assistants claim that the children see the teacher and assistant teacher as co-teachers.

It appears to us, therefore, that the work identity of assistants is primarily determined by the treatment accorded them by children, and secondarily, by the perception parents have of them.

One assistant elaborates as follows: Parents do not get close to the teacher or assistant teacher, just as she did not when she nas not yet a staff member, but only a parent. Something "stands in the way" of close communication between teaching staff and parents. Thus, since becoming a staff member, she feels somewhat estranged from the parent body and, in her new role, affiliates with the teacher.

The concept of the paraprofessional functioning as a bridge between professionals and the clientele would seem to imply that paraprofessionals, besides taking other groups for reference, should generate a sense of identity of their own, as paraprofessionals occupying a unique position in the Head Start organization. Nonetheless, neither of the two assistants had developed an identity as a paraprofessional and a sense of solidarity with other paraprofessionals at the center. In their free time they do not meet informally only with other paraprofessionals and they hold no meetings among themselves. One assistant, SC, declares that she cannot imagine just paraprofessionals getting together and excluding professionals, for problem solving requires the professionals' presence: "All should get together and try to iron /problems/ out."

VI. Work Ethic

Both teachers assert that their assistants arrive on time in the morning, are dependable and responsible and committed to doing the job. One teacher, BT, however, differentiates the depth of commitment between herself and her assistant. She believes that she is more committed than SC because of her freedom from home responsibilities: she is unmarried, has no children and can dedicate herself completely to her job.

VII. Work Relations between Teachers and Assistants

The work relations between teachers and assistants are characterized by an egalitarian ethos. The teacher, BW, makes it a point never to "order KU around," because KU "knows what is expected of her and she'll do it." Furthermore, the teacher should not think that "she is better" than the assistant and she explains that "We don't use the names 'teacher' and 'teacher aide' ... /because/ parents don't know who the teacher and teacher aide are; they see us as working together and we don't stress she is the aide and I the teacher."

Respect, trust, friendship are some of the expressions used by BT to describe the relationship she has with the assistant, SC. She asks SC's opinions about what activities to introduce in the classroom; she discusses SC's educational plans on a friend-to-friend basis; she trusts her enough to ask her, on five minutes notice, to take over the class because she is leaving the Center temporarily. She further stresses that "We work well together; we understand each other." Thus, in their self-presentation to the outside world, teacher and assistant emphasize that they are fundamentally equals functioning as a team, a stance which is

corroborated by the flexible division of labor described above.

In the relationship between BW and KU we even have evidence that at times it is the assistant who leads or sets the example, and the teacher who accepts her assistant's leadership. Thus KU "reminds" BW to put newspapers on the table and aprons on the children when they paint. And BW acknowledges that she follows KU's recommendations in the area of first aid: "She knows more /than I do/ because she has children. Also, as we saw above, BT appears to have learned from SC about managing the children.

Nonetheless, working relations are not as smooth as the ethos of equality and mutuality, enunciated by teachers, would imply. Two sources of conflict exist, which can be classified as differences in philosophy of education and role interpretation.

There is a fundamental disagreement between BT and SC on philosophy of early childhood education and the meaningful way to structure time. Thus, BT says that it is unnecessary to have a very structured program. Her primary aims are to encourage creativity, increase the child's feelings of competence and induce a feeling of excitement from learning. BT emphasizes social skills and sense of self-esteem, whereas SC, in BT's estimation, is more interested in the academic area and thinks that accomplishment comes only when children, for example, know how to write their names. Thus, BT points out, "When I use free time, SC says: 'What are we going to do?' And we're already doing something."

Another indication of conflict in this area is BT's desire for children to be self-directive and self-creative in the literal sense of the word when engaged in art activities. SC, on the other hand, draws for the child, thus providing models for the child to copy, and even guides his hand.

A final source of contention -- over role allocation -- characterizes the relationship between BW and KU. KU is upset by BW's keeping record - writing as her sole prerogative and feels that this, like other role components, should be a joint activity of both teacher and assistant. According to KU, BW has no confidence in KU's ability to write and expects her to supervise the children while she does the records.

How are these differences resolved? In the last example, BW simply asserts her authority. When she takes over record-writing activity she asserts in fact that one of the two has to do it while the other watches the children, and that if she delegated this activity to KU, the records "would never get done," in other words, that she has no confidence in KU's competence and that by fiat she is the more competent to do this. While BW and KU have several times argued over who shall undertake this role activity, BW ultimately has the last word.

We note that this may be a perfectly rational decision: undoubtedly BW, as a college graduate is presumably superior in writing proficiency to KU, who has not finished high school. Undoubtedly, too, roles have to be differentiated: one person to do paperwork, the other to supervise the children. But what is important to note here is that the basic ideology of the relationship, while egalitarian, is not totally so and, furthermore, that in a case of conflict it may be replaced by the naked assertion of authority on the part of the teacher.

The same assertion of authority may hold, though not to the same degree of the resolution of differences between BT and SC. BT asserts that the differences in philosophy of education really do not matter: "Each pursues what she wants in small groups." Although they have different educational

outlooks "it's no great problem." She thus downplays the existing differences and claims that no conflict results.

Yet from BT's criticism of SC's attitudes it is evident that SC is very much aware of these differences and that they cause her some unease. BT complains of SC's docility. BT says that SC follows her recommendations in the classroom, but she has a tendency "to accept," resign herself and possibly resent the recommendations: "She should raise objections ... She should verbalize what she's feeling so we could talk about it,"

We note that it would be more appropriate for BT "to verbalize," that is, to explain the advantages and disadvantages of different teaching philosophies and practices, since she has, more likely than SC, the theoretical wherewithal. SC most probably is acting spontaneously (based on her cultural background) in her more structured approach to children because she has not consciously thought out why she is doing what she does. Thus BT is putting the burden of resolving differences "unfairly" on SC because she refuses to acknowledge her leadership responsibilities openly.

A second criticism of SC by BT is that SC often withdraws from active engagement with the children. She leaves the room when children are occupied because she thinks that she is not needed. BT wants SC to "be more active and feel she's needed every minute by children" and she would like her to take a more "guiding role" in the classroom. It is likely that withdrawal, just like docility, represents an adaptive response for SC. She may feel that she is faced with contradictory demands: that she be more guiding, interacting with children and, at the same time, that she not impose standards on them -- like helping them draw. There again BT may not make herself clear as to what she wants from SC.

Thus, in the end, differences in approach to education are not really resolved. Neither party to the conflict really converts the other, nor is a compromise reached, and professional status makes might (just as in the relationship between BW and KU), while the less equal of the two to the relationship must endure.

While the source of conflict between BW and KU appears trivial, it may not be because the role activity which is being fought over may have high symbolic significance, both literally and figuratively. In the case of BT and SC the different outlook on education is fundamental to the relationship. Although BT glosses it over as being really "no problem" (because she has her way) they undoubtedly cause some dissatisfaction and role confusion for SC.

VIII. The Meaning of Work: Work Experience in Relation to Self-Image, Status, Continuity between School and Home, and Job Mobility

Teachers and assistants are unanimous that the assistants are "more involved" in their present jobs in Head Start than in their previous jobs (which were unskilled, such as factory work and work in restaurants). The assistants' self-image was enhanced through their feelings of increased adequacy and interpersonal competence.

For instance KU mentions that prior to her Head Start job experience she talked very little, but that the job "has gotten all that 'embarrass,' 'shy' out of me." The other assistant, SC, who "lived alone and saw nobody" claimed that the job had quieted down her doubts about herself; she feels that she is now "as good as an expert."

The job is felt to be intrinsically status-enhancing (in reference to jobs in manufacturing and low-skilled services). As one assistant, KU, put

it: "It makes me feel big. I feel proud being with different people. On the street all I hear is: Miss U, Miss U ... Children say to their friends: 'That's my teacher.'" The children are thus validating the assistant's status as a co-teacher rather than as teacher aide -- the official status.

The assistants also conceive of their jobs as helpful to performing more adequately in their roles as parents. There is an intrinsic continuity bewween school and home: The approaches to children, the techniques of teaching, curriculum materials can be transferred from the school to the home setting. KU says that she "picked up things" in the classroom which she is teaching to her own children. SC learned how to teach arts and crafts and academic skills which she can also cultivate in her own child. The relationship between home and school is reciprocal: What the assistants have learned through managing and teaching their own children can also be transferred to the school setting.

Considering the commitment of assistants to their jobs, the continuities of role content between school and home, the feelings of competence developed out of job experience and the status-enhancing character of the job, it is not surprising that the assistants should want to go on with teaching and, for one of the two, to go on to "better things." For SC, "This is not just another job..." Thus, she states that "with all the things I learned I could go on to another job, and another school ... high as I can go, just go." Her teacher, BT, also encouraged her to continue her education and aspire to become a full-fledged teacher.

The other assistant, KU, has no such aspirations: She sees one component of the teacher role -- paperwork -- as too taxing and feels that

her several children demand too much of her time for her to aspire to go further. She is thus perfectly satisfied "to work along with a teacher." Her rejection of mobility may be due in part to her teacher's lack of support for any mobility aspirations, besides the teacher's own lack of desire for mobility.

TEACHING: CENTER TWO

The patterns of work relations between teachers and assistant teachers at Center Two, for two out of three dyadic relationships, are not too dissimilar from those described for Center One, so that we shall not present illustrative material for them in this section. Rather, we wish to focus on the one relationship which appears to depart, not only from work relations as observed at Centers One and Two, but also from relations observed at the other three centers in our sample. Preliminary inspection of the data from all five centers reveals that the relationship between teacher SH and teacher assistant FD at Center Two is indeed deviant with respect to all pairs of relations between teachers and assistants which obtain at all five centers.

First and most important, there seems to be some doubt that the teacher SH enthusiastically supports the employment of a paraprofessional to share the work with her. At any rate she gives no credit for the paraprofessional's family experience in helping her to manage children and appears to be dubious about the actual contributions which the teacher aide can make to the operation of the classroom.

Rather than the flexible allocation of responsibilities which characterized other teacher-teacher aide relations, SH each week assigns her aide, FD, to one corner of the room (block corner, arts and crafts, etc.),

which she is to supervise and from which she is not supposed to move even if no children are playing there. FD quite naturally feels that "working with SH is like sitting around doing nothing," that she is not "needed," and that "I'm just like ... if something turns up ... to do it." She, furthermore, resents the fact that she does not participate in planning -- SH sets up the schedule of activities by herself -- and is not allowed to set up the classroom. In view of the limited participation of FD in the classroom, it is not surprising that SH believes FD incapable of running the classroom when she is absent and expects the Center director to hire a substitute teacher.

Rather than the mutual consultation between teacher and teacher aide in other classrooms, SH is adamant that she has a well-worked out philosophy of teaching which she expects the aide to carry out fully. While paying lip service to the consideration that custodial and housekeeping chores should not be carried out primarily by the assistant, but that the teacher should do her share to soften somewhat the inequality between teacher and aide, she adds that she is faster than the aide in doing the menial work, which may be a major reason why she does it. At any rate, she gives the impression that she is better at every task and is in full control of the classroom, with little need for the aide to help her.

SH has developed a highly structured supervisory arrangement. She holds a formal conference with her assistant once a month and makes a written evaluation of her every second month. Her supervisory conferences include some training in child development and methods of discipline. Although she thinks that an outside agency should do this kind of training, she does not feel inadequate to the task. She rejects the idea that

professionals need training in the proper use of paraprofessionals.

The assistant, FD, appears to resent SH's attribution of all-knowing professional expertise to herself. FD claims on behalf of lay expertise her own superior knowledge of children because she has children whereas SH does not: "Someone with children knows more than someone without.... She only knows what she read.... I have experience."

The aide is not conceived by SH as performing a bridging function between herself and parents. SH, as a matter of fact, is intent upon denying that FD affects her relationship to parents in any way: "I don't permit it to happen..." She does not think that aides are more knowledgeable about the community and the backgrounds of children than the professionals. It need hardly be added that the employment of the aide has not affected SH's way of teaching.

Although FD sees herself as a "teacher's helper" and thinks she is so perceived by parents, she feels definitely closer to parents than to the teacher, SH. This is in contrast with the pattern of identification which characterizes the other teacher aides at Centers One and Two. Furthermore, FD is the only teacher aide who believes that paraprofessionals have interests of their own which might be furthered by meetings among themselves, so that they could talk about their feelings about their professional superiors.

In contrast with the generally satisfying work ethic of other teacher aides, FD is described by SH as being half-an-hour late each morning, as having taken the job "because it is convenient," as being less than fully committed ("It's just a job for her.") and as putting home before the job.

Work relations between SH and FD are marked by the assertion of authority on the part of SH and concurrent rebellion by FD. Thus SH states that FD "must go by my philosophy, what I believe," she must learn how "to follow," which is not difficult since SH is "structured," and she is not permitted to inject ideas into the program. SH perceives herself as "being fair, not taking advantage," as adhering to principles of "good human relations" such as praising the aide, and as being recognized by the aide for her professional expertise.

FD, on the other hand, does not concur with SH's "philosophy," particularly her ideas on discipline -- SH is "too strict for three year olds"; she claims that SH never compliments her so that she has no idea whether she did right in a particular situation; when she makes suggestions SH invariably turns them down. As FD says, "SH feels she has the degree and 'no one can tell me what to do.'" Furthermore, FD acts contrary to SH's expectations when she can get away with it (when SH is out of the room): for instance, she participates in the children's play although SH insists that children should play only with peers and not adults, and she has taught the children to write their names in the face of SH's opposition. It is obvious that FD chafes against the rigid structuring of the classroom and her own restricted place within it: "I would like my own class ... or just more authority."

Nevertheless, despite her limited role in the classroom and difficult relations with the teacher, the job has positive implications for her, as it has for all teacher aides at the two Centers. She perceives it as bringing some variety into her life and relief from what are at times burdensome chores: "It's not really a job to me. It's like coming out and getting away from everything, as far as the house and the kids and

the cleaning .... To me it means like freedom ... like a breakaway .... It's like getting away from the same routine every day .... Instead of just cleaning, cooking, washing clothes, going to the store, it's something different, coming out and doing some work."

SOCIAL WORK: CENTER TWO

I. Attitudes toward the Employment of Paraprofessionals

As with teaching, it is obvious that in social work the professional could not service the bulk of the clientele without the help of paraprofessionals. They relieve the social worker from performing a number of routine tasks -- recruitment, accompanying children for medical screening to clinics, filling out records, etc. -- for which a Master's degree in social work is not necessary.

Nevertheless, while social workers require aides to help perform the work, the attitudes of social workers and center directors to the employment of paraprofessionals have been less than enthusiastic because the latter's work ethic, their general functioning and their attitudes toward, and work relations with the social workers have all left something to be desired.

Also, paraprofessionals in the social work area have been conceived of as interclass communicators, who can transmit values and information across the "gap" between, on the one hand, the middle-class institution and professionals and, on the other, the clientele, and who can bring these two classes of persons into closer communication with one another. Thus, the center director at Center Two speaks of using paraprofessionals "to transmit neighborhood values to the program which you have to work with

or work around .... Paraprofessionals may be a bridge as to where and how one can move one way or another." "Yet," she adds, "this hasn't happened enough." Also, the social worker at Center Two disclaims that a well-working bridging function has been put into operation; rather, she states that paraprofessionals "undermine" relations between the parents and her.

Furthermore, the social worker at that center claims that her role lacks clear definition -- she is not sure whether she functions as a staff member who supervises social service staff or as a consultant to them -- and she has heard rumors from Head Start circles that the social worker ought to function as a consultant to the family assistant who would supervise the family workers. Nevertheless, she is sure that the program could not be enacted without a strong dose of social work expertise, that the staff cannot function as substitute social workers, and that, unfortunately, Head Start has become the paraprofessionals' program where it is the professional who feels out of place and not part of the Head Start enterprise.

II. Role Allocation

In contrast to the situation in teaching, the allocation of functions among social service personnel is much more differentiated. The social worker allocates to herself the following tasks: psychological counseling of parents, work with multiproblem families involving contacts with a variety of social agencies, development of community resources, and supervision and training of social service staff. She does not delegate the above core tasks and, on the other hand, through the use of paraprofessionals

she is freed from tasks which she does not consider to be "professional" in nature, such as recruitment of children and families to the center, clerical work, accompanying children to the hospital for medical screening, etc.

The paraprofessional social service staff includes a family assistant and two family workers. The components of their roles are the following:

1. Recruitment of children and parents to the program
2. Sustaining participation of members in the program
3. Enhancing health and welfare status of participants
4. Setting up an environment for social interaction on part of parents: buying supplies, making coffee, "setting up" the family room
5. Organizing parent groups in the center (acting as guides or advisors to groups of parents who form the policy-making machinery at the centers and engage in recreational activities)
6. Enhancing parent-teacher communication
7. Acting as referral persons to the social worker when they encounter deep psychological, marital, etc. problems in parents
8. Miscellaneous (baby-sitting, filling in gaps in personnel)

(For more detailed presentation of role components in a preceding study, see Progress Report, Studies of the Social Organization of Head Start Centers, Document 2, December 1967, pp. 51-52.)

While the social worker thinks of the family assistant role as differentiated somewhat from that of family workers -- she expects her to supervise the workers and to take an active role in recruiting the parents for social activities and the governance of the center -- the family assistant has reinterpreted her role to her own satisfaction and it appears to

be indistinguishable from that of the family workers.

Thus the director of the center and the social worker have predefined the role of family assistant as "supervision" and "group work," but the assistant refuses to supervise because she does not want to "boss" anybody and she is interested primarily in working directly with families and giving them services rather than in engaging in such "mundane" tasks as sending off notices of meetings and incorporating parents into the structure of the center.

We note here two facts: 1) the refusal to perform tasks allocated to her rank; and 2) the idiosyncratic reinterpretation of her role. Since she is functioning in a similar manner to that of family workers rather than in the manner envisaged by the director and social worker for someone in her position and earning a higher salary than the family workers, it is not surprising that the two workers perceive her as like them in role behavior though unfairly more highly rewarded by virtue of her title.

That the distinction between family assistant and family workers in both titles and salaries fails to be matched by a corresponding distinction in roles is true also of Center One and of the center where we worked in 1967-68 (see Progress Report, December 1967). This discrepancy is resented by family workers in all these centers and alluded to apologetically by the professional staff (center director, social worker).

The idiosyncratic interpretation of role is not limited only to the family assistant. One of the two family workers, GC, at Center Two has also redefined her role in the direction of "group work" with parents and away from the giving of services to individual parents. She likes to organize parents around issues -- like the improvement of public schools --

to get them involved in their children's education and to teach them leadership skills which can be used once they have severed their relationship with Head Start. She believes that not all parents have personal problems (welfare, housing, health) which must be attended to by family staff and, as to those who do, she procrastinates and is only too happy to have these problems taken over, by her default, by the other family worker, the family assistant or the social worker.

Only one person, family worker OG, functions in accordance with the full panoply of her job tasks, for even the social worker, by training and by inclination a caseworker, prefers to devote much of her time to counseling of parents and neglects the group work function of her supervisory role. Thus the family staff refer difficult, psychological problems of parents to her, but do not look to her for help with problems having to to with the recruitment and participation of parents in group programs about which she has no more expertise than the family staff.

To conclude our presentation of the division of labor, we reiterate four themes: 1) high differentiation of roles between social worker and social service staff; 2) low differentiation of roles between family assistant and family workers; 3) resistance to assuming the full complement of tasks required by a role and idiosyncratic redefinition of roles; and 4) conflict between two fundamental fields of practice in social work: casework and group work.

III. Socialization into Work Role

A. Role Induction

Since the social worker came on the job after the family staff had been hired, she was not engaged in giving orientation to newcomers. Very little orientation appears to have been given by the previous social worker. One family worker remarks that when she asked the center director for assistance in defining her role, the director quipped: "Do I really have to tell you!" (True, she had been the Policy Advisory Committee Chairman for some time and had presumably, in the director's eyes, acquired some knowledge of family workers' activities through contact with the staff.)

This family worker, rather than the social worker or director, was instrumental in orienting a new family worker, OG, who said to us: "I didn't know what to do when I was new on the job," and who thought that she was being hired as a baby sitter for the parents. She complained that the job was never explained to her or a job description posted so that parents would know "who I was."

When we interviewed her, the social worker was working on a "guidebook" which explains recruitment, record keeping, medical forms, etc., which she expects the family assistant to apply in her orientation of new workers (two vacancies were imminent when one worker was promoted to family assistant and the other worker quit her job).

B. Supervision of Role Behavior

The social worker at Center Two would like to have supervision from, or at least consultation with, a more experienced professional in her field. She cannot obtain supervision from the center director, who is an

educator. She does consult occasionally with a long-time social worker in the counseling section of the delegate agency, but this has not become a stable consulting arrangement. She thus feels isolated, complaining that she "cannot communicate with anyone social work-wise."

With respect to supervision of the social service staff, the social worker holds weekly meetings in which the activities of the previous week are reviewed and decisions made as to "how best to help families." Unlike the teaching situation where work processes are observable -- that is, teachers introduce ways of communicating with and guiding a child which are visible to the assistant and which she can follow, and the assistant's actual performance is visible to the teacher who can thus better supervise her -- neither the social worker nor the social service aides are visible to one another while working with parents. Thus supervision is at a remove from the actual work process and is carried out purely verbally.

Also there seems to be some confusion about who should do the supervising. The social worker refers family workers to the family assistant to obtain help, but the family assistant is reluctant to supervise and the family workers prefer to bypass the assistant and to go to the social worker because she is "trained" and "more knowledgeable."

One family worker, OG, feels that she does not really get supervised by anybody: no one follows up on what she does and she expresses a preference for an individual conference with the social worker as a supervisory mechanism. The other family worker, GC, states that she "hasn't learned much from other people .... It's just sort of feeling your way along, learning as you go along, more or less."

C. Formal Training for Role Behavior

Inservice training meetings are held once a week by the social worker for the social service staff. The social worker has tried various techniques aimed at improving the staff's performance: role playing, reading books and articles to be discussed at the inservice training session, having one of the staff take over the role of running the session. The role playing "didn't work out," the staff did not do the required reading; it is too early for the social worker to judge the effectiveness of the last technique.

The social worker thinks that, because of the resistance of staff to the social work principles she tries to inculcate and their uneasy relationship to her, inservice training should be given outside the center "in a classroom, lab kind of way." The social worker states that she is not able to give staff what they want or need because neither she nor they are sure of what they want or need to function effectively. (Note that this was expressed by the social worker after she had been six months on the job! The difficulties in the relationship between social worker and social service aides, to be made explicit below -- see Section VII -- revolve around cultural value differences.)

D. Lay Socialization vs. Professional Socialization or Practical Experience vs. Book Learning

The social service paraprofessionals seem intent upon asserting the superiority of their commonsense and practical lay experience over the professional's "book learning." One of the family workers, GC, emphasizes that she has experience in raising a family: "You can't knock down

a mother's experience with four children .... Nobody trained a parent to be a parent, yet it's still a profession." Comparing herself to the social worker with whom she worked prior to the present one, she claims that that social worker should never have been hired because she had no children and was an older woman. Being a mother herself, GC "can understand parents' problems." The professional might have book learning, but "when it comes to practical things," the paraprofessional knows better.

The family assistant also asserts that social workers go by the book, they should spend more time with people, they should use common sense. Furthermore, they make an inappropriate use of the professional vocabulary: "Professionals use big words, they don't talk plain English." For her also, practical experience is just as important as school training.

Nevertheless, some reservations about the superiority of pragmatic experience to professional training is expressed by GC when she admits that, though she has lived in the community for many years, knows everybody and is aware of people's problems, the professional has a trained capacity to put things in a perspective which is unavailable to her: "The director of the center is trained to be aware of certain things that even though I live in the community I might not see."

IV. The Paraprofessional as a Bridge between Professionals and the Clientele

The most important bridging function performed by the social service staff is to draw parents to the center. Thus, the family assistant is praised by the director of the delegate agency for bringing the Spanish community to the agency and the Head Start Center: "You have been like a bridge ...." This recruitment function is facilitated by the attempt to

match the social attributes of the family staff member with those of parents. Thus, the older Puerto Rican family assistant is assigned to a large extent the older Puerto Rican women; the Negro family worker works mainly with Negro parents and the Puerto Rican family worker works mainly with Puerto Rican parents.

Because the social service staff have lived in the neighborhood for many years and they know many of the parents "from way back," parents approach them more easily than they do the professionals. If a parent is unhappy about an aspect of her child's development or resents something the teacher does, she may approach a family worker, who then arranges a conference between the parent and the teacher. As family worker OG put it, "I maintain liaison between the teacher and the parent. I am the middle person who brings them together if the parent is shy." The other family worker GC also puts great emphasis on her linking function between teachers and parents, and social worker and parents, to the extent that she thinks of this role as all encompassing, to the detriment of other social service functions which have no bridging component.

The bridging role of social service staff is felt to be especially important because parents are reluctant to talk directly to professionals, since the latter are "outside persons" and the parents do not know them, and the family staff have the interpersonal skills to relate to parents in their own language and in a manner which appears to the parents to be trustworthy. Thus, the family assistant points out that when she talks to parents she "doesn't act like a worker but like a friend or neighbor": "I talk casually and suggest things. I don't act cold or business-like. You can find out a lot that way." Then she can relate to the teacher the

information she has gathered about circumstances in the family which may be pertinent to understanding a child's behavior.

Family worker GC contrasts her own behavior with that of the social worker: "The social worker relates less well to parents than workers. It's more of a business for her .... Family workers feel their way along. They live with people and know them as neighbors and friends. They relate to them on a neighborly or friendship basis." She adds, stressing the ambiguity inherent in her role, that: "Family staff know that they have a job to do. It's a business, but then again it's not as set up a thing as the social work."

Though emphasizing the social worker's outsider status, her "ignorance" about the families recruited to the center, her tendency to "apply the book all the way" and the parents' reluctance to approach her, the family staff refers parents to the social worker for counseling purposes -- an endeavor which they realize they are not competent to carry out. But this referral, particularly on the part of the family assistant, is half-hearted and the social worker states unambiguously that the family assistant, by her protectiveness over the parents, "undermines relations between me and the parents."

The social worker qualifies her remark that family staff do not act as a bridge between her and the parents by stating that she has gotten some knowledge from family staff about culture patterns and values of parents from different ethnic groups as well as knowledge about the community..

V. Identification Patterns

Family staff, in contrast with teaching staff, identify more closely with parents than they do with other staff members, especially the social worker. Thus, a family worker GC claims that parents see her more as a parent like themselves because she has young children and interests and problems similar to theirs. In her estimation, parents see her as a parent activity worker -- concerned with stimulating parent interaction and organization -- rather than as an assistant social worker closely allied and working with the social worker. She, on the other hand, feels closest to parents because she is a parent and can have conversations with them about her family.

The family assistant reports that parents see her as a neighbor, rather than as a staff member. Parents treat her as a neighbor, asking for assistance from her in such matters as writing a letter or filling out an application for project housing. They also confide in her "things they don't tell anybody." Although the family assistant thinks of herself as an assistant social worker (she has done casework in her earlier years under the supervision of a social worker), she feels, nevertheless, closer to parents than to the social worker. It should also be noted that when conflicts arise between the expectations of the social worker and those of parents, she is likely to do the parents' bidding.

Family worker OG appears to be in some ways an exception to the above observations. Summing up her position she says: "I am still seeking my identity." Parents see her as a parent like themselves, they feel at ease with her and she feels closer to the parents than to other staff members. Nevertheless, she wants to be seen as a staff member: "You

have to bend with the parent. If you're too polite the parent feels uncomfortable. But you shouldn't bend too much because it breaks the relationship. Then she's not looking to you as a staff person, as an authority. She's looking to you as an ordinary friend and this is the way she'll treat you. I don't think that should be, because you lose something in the relationship."

In her interaction with parents, OG makes it clear that she is also a parent so that there will be a clear basis for understanding parents' problems with their children, but she feels that she also needs a separate identity as a staff member "so that parents have more confidence": "My parents think of family staff not as part of staff but as regular parents. This is good to find out grievances, but to help them you have to establish what you are, identify yourself as a family worker." While desirous of an identity other than that of parent, nevertheless she does not see herself as a social worker because she claims not to be qualified enough to live by such a role perception. (It should be noted that this family worker, with the strongest need of any on the family staff for an autonomous identity as paraprofessional and a parallel rejection of a parent identity, is also the only person presently enrolled in college and planning for a social work career.)

Since she appears -- the only one among the family service staff -- to get along quite well with the social worker (besides which she is oriented to a social work career) it is perhaps not surprising that she feels that meetings between paraprofessionals to the exclusion of professionals would serve no useful purpose: "I don't think meetings of paraprofessionals would accomplish anything. The social worker is needed."

The family assistant, on the other hand, whose relations with the social worker are tense, claims that such meetings would be worthwhile between family and teaching staffs because paraprofessionals could express their resentment of professionals. Here the assistant is not so much setting forth claims for the validity of solidarity and self-consciousness among workers sharing a similar position, but rather seeing the values of such intercourse for expressing personal feelings about superiors.

VI. Work Ethic

In contradistinction to the work ethic characterizing teacher aides, the family staff come late to work, are not dependable, sit around talking when they should be making home visits or writing reports, do not follow recommendations, do not like to attend staff meetings, and in general do not use time efficiently. They are also said by the social worker to be "not motivated," "not committed," and having "little sense of responsibility." One family worker, for instance, failed to show up for work for one week out of anger, when she was not promoted to the position of family assistant.

The center director ascribes these problems to lack of supervision stemming from turnover of social workers and the part-time nature of their work at the center.

VII. Work Relations between Social Worker and Social Service Staff

In contrast with work relations among teaching staff the work relations between the social worker and family staff appear to be tense and conflictful and characterized by avoidance of, or resistance to, professional authority.

After a year at the Center, the social worker felt dejected and dispirited. The job descriptions she had formulated were not being used as guides to role behavior by family staff; the records which they wrote were made up of short entries instead of full descriptions of what had transpired between the worker and parents; over-identification of a worker with some families precluded adequate servicing of those families' needs.

The social worker summed up her disappointment over the performance of family staff by stating that all along there had been resistance to her training efforts. While formally acknowledging her professional expertise -- family staff asks for her opinions and advice -- they do not implement her recommendations: "Outwardly I have all the answers; underneath it's not true." After many months on the job she said: "I'm still at the point of trying to establish a good, trusting working relationship with two-way exchange."

What are some of the sources of strain in the relations between social worker and family staff? We may classify them into three categories: status incongruences; differing expectations about role behavior; and value conflicts.

Status incongruences

There are several status incongruences between social worker and family staff, on the dimensions of age, residence and length of time of employment. Thus the social worker is younger than family staff, she is an outsider to the community, whereas they are long-time residents; finally, they have seniority over her, having been employed at the Center long before the social worker was hired. These are all reasons why the social worker is less than fully accepted by family staff.

Differing expectations about role behavior

The social worker has set up guidelines for role behavior by staff to which no heed is paid, each person having interpreted her role idiosyncratically and thus functioning the way she wants to (see above Section I, Role Allocation).

Value conflicts

A principal source of strain is the conflict between social worker and family staff over the appropriate perspective -- lay or professional -- within which to view parents' problems and to service parents. Thus, the social worker, despite her best efforts has found the staff "unreceptive to social work ideas":

1. They "do things" for parents, instead of acting in the role of enablers
2. They do not respect parents' rights to make decisions for themselves, but rather want to force particular courses of action on them
3. They evidence inadequate self-management of feelings and attitudes:
   a. They are partial to some parents instead of treating all equally
   b. They are overfriendly, not knowing the difference between a "professional" and a friendship relationship
   c. In some cases, they are overjudgmental with respect to parents' attitudes and behavior
4. They reject psychological causation: The psychological cause-and-effect relationship is foreign to them: Thus, they refuse to explore parents' feelings and also their own feelings when helping parents with their problems

5. They do not respect the existing structure within which helping relationships can be developed: For example, they want to help everybody, including non-members of the Head Start community
6. They overdo one aspect of the professional ethic: confidentiality, to the point where the social worker "doesn't know what's happening."

Although the social worker has tried to inculcate social work principles and attitudes into staff, her efforts have been to no avail. Thus, she attempted to explore a worker's feelings about not wanting to become involved in a family's problems because she over-identified with them. The worker used joking as a defense in the interchange and thus did not permit a mutual probing of feelings and attitudes. The social worker also tried a variety of techniques -- role playing, giving reading assignments in social work materials, etc., to induce staff to adopt a more professional perspective. In all these efforts she was unsuccessful.

VIII. The Meaning of Work: Work Experience in Relation to Self-Image, Status and Job Mobility

At Center Two also, the social worker encourages staff to go on with their education. As the family assistant puts it, the social worker "repeats it over and over." But staff, with one exception, "are not receptive to career development." Competing commitments to her family prevent family worker GC from continuing her education, and the older age as well as "lack of ambition" of the family assistant make her unwilling to go back to school.

Only family worker OG is willing to improve her chances of getting a better job in the future. She is presently attending college and is interested in preparing herself for a social worker career. (It might be noted that OG was the only person who achieved vertical mobility at the Center. Despite the other family worker's (GC) seniority over OG, the latter was promoted to the position of family assistant, when that position became vacant.)

OG extensively discussed the meaning of her work for her. She felt that her job had increased her status in the community: "People in the community see the change in my dress, they see me walking around with papers.... Your whole attitude changes in a job like this.... People... look at me differently.... We had elections for the Board of the Community Corporation and ... several people came up to me and asked me why I didn't run.... It was sort of satisfying that they should come with this suggestion." Her self-confidence and social skills improved: "I felt unsure about answering the telephone, I felt weird about calling someone to get information. Now I do it as a matter of routine." Her knowledge about Head Start and the larger world also deepened: She now understands how the center is organized and administered, where funds come from, the politics that are involved in funding, etc.

SOCIAL WORK: CENTER ONE

At Center One, as at Center Two, the social worker indicates some fear that paraprofessionals may eventually replace professionals: "Head Start may say workers can do the professional's job, but nothing substitutes for training and experience. Workers are good as aides to the

social worker." For instance, she thinks that many tasks can be performed by paraprofessionals, such as collecting information on families, but that she "must take over where correspondence is concerned with other professional agencies." She adds that "paraprofessionals make a great contribution and are here to stay.... It's not lowering social work standards, as long as they are supervised and get some training."

Themes one, two and four, referred to above (see pp. 25-28) characterize the division of labor at Center One, as they do at Center Two. The social worker performs core tasks which she does not delegate to the family staff and she is freed from tasks which she does not consider to be "professional" in nature. As at Center Two, the roles of family worker and family assistant are not differentiated. The family assistant "does the job of workers," says the administrative director, "whereas she should be supervising." There is a great deal of overlap between the roles of family assistant and family worker: As the social worker puts it, "They do the medical program together, home visiting, record writing."

As at Center Two, the social worker appears to emphasize the casework aspect of her role to the neglect of group work. As the administrative director puts it, her role should include working with parents as a group, getting them to participate in community programs, informing them on public issues. The parents' personal lives would be affected by their participation in changing institutions as well as by the individual problem-solving presently carried out by the social worker. As of the time of interviewing, the administrative director contemplated hiring a person to deal with the group work and community organization components of the social work role, heretofore neglected by the social worker.

Finally, we would like to note that, while there has been no idiosyncratic reinterpretation of roles on the part of family staff, there appears to be some resentment of the quality of "jack-of-all-trades" inherent in the definition of these roles. As a family worker puts it: "I cook, I take over a class, I work where I'm needed.... The job is not clearly defined.... I would like more of a routine every day, what's expected of me. There's no day-to-day schedule. You never know what you're going to do.... You get called and something is added...."

Family staff have been given no orientation to their roles by the social worker or central administrative staff. As one family worker says, "People are not told enough about what's expected of them." A new family worker is instructed only by the family assistant or other family worker. At a later time, she, in turn, by virtue of her seniority, provided some orientation to the job for a new family worker. Thus, as at Center Two, role induction is carried out through peer socialization rather than through orientation by professionals.

The administrative director deplores the poor supervision of family staff by the social worker, which she contrasts with the excellent supervision of teacher aides by teachers. This, she explains, and excuses in part, by pointing to the scattered premises of the delegate agency, which make it difficult properly to supervise family staffs at all centers.

There are no family staff group conferences and the social worker states that supervision takes the form of individual conferences, often initiated by an aide. However, family staff are reluctant to call the social worker on the telephone, when they think the matter "is not important enough to bother," so that individual conferences are infrequent. On the whole, family service staff carry out their activities using their

own initiative and with little consultation from the social worker.

Although the social worker insists that family staff should get training in, for instance, record writing and learning how to use and teach parents to use community resources (hospitals, legal services, job training programs), we have no indication that systematic training is being offered to staff through regular inservice training conferences. Undoubtedly, some training on an individual basis occurs, but it is not systematic group training. The administrative director indicates that there are many skills which the social worker could impart to her staff, but that professionals in general ought themselves to be trained about how to carry out teamwork and especially how to supervise and train paraprofessionals.

As far as extra-mural training of family staff is concerned, such as the courses which are offered at New York University, she thinks that staff cannot apply the newly learned principles and skills if the professional with whom they work is not knowledgeable about what they have learned and has not gone through the training herself. That training at NYU appears to be irrelevant to role performance at the Center is asserted by a family worker, who says: "I can't use NYU ideas at the Center. Central staff says NYU is only a school and you're back at work now." Thus, two suggestions she made about possible parent activities, which were stimulated by her inservice training, were turned down by the social worker.

A family worker asserts that the professional social worker's methods "don't work" for this population. The social worker "has been taught in school a way to do things ... she lives by it." This family worker, on the other hand, tells the social worker that she "knows how parents feel and must do things in a particular way," based on her feel of what the

parents are like and her own knowledge of backgrounds and problems. That lay socialization may better prepare staff how to relate to a clientele from which they derive, is acknowledged by the social worker who leaves the ways of relating to parents to the staff's discretion.

At this Center, family worker IY is the best exponent of the bridging function of paraprofessionals. She thinks of herself as a "go-between" between parents and professional staff: Thus, she lets the social worker know why parents fail to show up for meetings, what parents' needs are; on the other hand, she explains to parents "why teachers do things a certain way," what professional staff can do for them and help them achieve; what OEO, the funding agency, expects of them.

She feels that paraprofessionals can reach parents, "the deep part," better than professionals: They can find out parents' feelings and attitudes. She would like parents to see her, not as a social worker, but as a friend: She talks to parents "as if learning to be friends," thus inducing parents to relax and to make personal confidences to her. Thus, IY contrasts the social worker's behavior with that of family staff: "Social workers are cold.... Family staff are closer to parents, warmer." Parents invite IY to their homes for dinner, but not the social worker: "I seem on the same level with parents. Parents are afraid the social worker is above them."

The family staff obviously perform a cathartic function for parents, who can "let off steam" with them and they constitute the first line of service. When problems require professional expertise, parents are referred to the social worker, who can counsel them or act as an advocate with bureaucratic organizations such as the Department of Social Services

and the Housing Authority.

Family staff describe themselves as being closer to parents than to the social worker. One family worker, TS, sees herself not so much as an assistant to the social worker as helping to run the center with the assistance of parents. The other family worker IY strongly identifies, if not over-identifies, with parents. She shows her empathy for them when she resonates with their "apathy" about coming to meetings, with their reluctance to be visited too often at home by family staff. Thus, she states that she herself does not like meetings, nor would she like frequent home visits. In the latter case, she actually reduced the number of home visits the social worker expected her to make, thus showing her identification with parents and her distance from the social worker.

The social worker complains about the "over-identification" of paraprofessionals with parents: Some identification is to be expected and, indeed, is necessary for an optimal level of relatedness, yet "getting too chummy and too involved gets in the way of doing their jobs."

None of the family staff members appears to have cultivated an autonomous paraprofessional identity, as evidenced in the lack of enthusiasm for the organization of meetings for paraprofessionals only.

The social worker at this Center complains of her staff's poor work habits. They arrive late in the morning, take long lunches, sit around doing nothing and do not follow recommendations. On payday they are permitted to go to the bank and may be gone all day. Although the center is supposed to phone attendance to central headquarters, the person calling may "cover up" for late people. The social worker bewails the "unstructured situation" where family staff, who are given "too much freedom," take advantage. Thus, as the administrative director says, "Another

agency would not be sympathetic" to the problems which make punctuality difficult and if Head Start is to be a training ground for entry into other jobs, it should insist on high standards of work performance.

There appears to be as much resistance on the part of family staff to professional authority as at Center Two, although the social worker at Center One is less aware of the tensions in work relations than her counterpart at Center Two. Thus, she states that she is "not resented" by the family staff, that she treats them well and criticizes them "kindly and gently." The family workers, on the other hand, avoid contact with her as much as possible -- they do not call her up if they are unsure of how to proceed, but rather talk the problem over among themselves or with the family assistant.

One family worker, TS, complains that when the social worker wants something done (for example, weekly reports on family staff activities, medical records on children), she "yells" and "stays on your back until you've done it for her." This family worker, furthermore, states that there have been no positive outcomes from her relations with the social worker: "She didn't teach me anything; she hasn't shown me anything." This family worker, as the chronic latecomer, particularly resents the social worker's telephoning the Center to find out who is late, who is not back from lunch, etc.

Family staff also resent the lack of appreciation for their work. For instance, the family workers feel that although they do what they can to involve as many parents as possible in activities and meetings, still they cannot satisfy the social worker's demands that still more parents be involved. As IY puts it: "The worst problem is parent participation. 'Top

brass' insists too much that parents participate, they push too much...." The burden of parent participation is thus placed by the social worker on the family staff, who are not able to produce the desired outcome. They are also unable to communicate to "our bosses," through their weekly reports, all the work that they have done during the week: "You can't explain on a weekly sheet all the time it took to make telephone calls and escort arrangements."

Another problem which the social worker at Center Two perceived in the relations between family staff and parents also characterizes Center One: that is, the lack of professionalism on the part of family staff. Thus, family staff is not sufficiently impartial; one family worker, TS, who was especially insensitive to the requirements for impartiality, was finally fired. Furthermore, excess friendliness and over-identification with some parents was seen by the administrative director as a problem, particularly at the beginning of employment, when newly hired staff must make the "difficult" transition between the role of parent and that of family staff member.

For TS, whose first job this is, the work has given her more self-confidence. She was at first doubtful that she could perform any kind of work, but now feels that she is ready to implement her original aspiration, which is to become a nurse. For IY, the work has had three major consequences: It increased her sense of interpersonal competence; it has broadened her outlook on life -- "I learn new things every day: government, the state, the city" -- finally, it has helped her put her own problems in perspective -- "The parents have worse problems than I have."

The family assistant, EM, also points to the implications the work

has had for her life: She claims that it led to personal growth -- she learned social skills: "The job took the 'shyness' out of me"; her self-esteem has increased -- "I feel important because I am helping someone"; she was able to transfer some skills acquired at work to help her own family; finally, she gets a great sense of personal satisfaction from the "gratitude" of the parents.

The social worker makes it a practice to prod all members of her staff to finish their education, whether high school, associate of arts or bachelor's degrees, and to think about entering the social work career. Her aim, as she states it, is "to elevate everyone I work with." She thinks of the positions that staff hold in Head Start as intrinsically "upgrading"; "The job has built up their egos, given them a sense of dignity; their appearance has changed; they have become more verbal.... All feel elevated as far as status in life goes.... They were domestics, or on welfare, or waitresses.... The job is upgrading.... They feel like they are professionals."

Although possibilities for vertical mobility are limited in Head Start -- the only instance being that from family worker to family assistant -- the administrative director points out that Head Start may be a training ground for other positions in community agencies and anti-poverty programs. Thus, she thinks that the sense of responsibility, self-confidence, and interpersonal competence acquired on the job may serve family staff in good stead for purposes of horizontal mobility.

Interpretations of the differences between the teaching and social work components of Head Start and between the centers will be the focus of the next substantive report, which will also present material from the other centers in our sample.